

EXTERNAL

AI Index: MDE 15/03/98

EXTRA 04/98

Torture / Fear of Torture

9 January 1998

ISRAEL / OCCUPIED TERRITORIES' Abd al-Rahman Isma'il Ghanimat, worker, aged
27, resident of Surif

'Abd al-Rahman Isma'il Ghanimat, arrested by Israeli security forces on 13 November 1997, is being held in Shikma (Ashkelon) Prison. He has allegedly been tortured during interrogation and Amnesty International fears that he may be facing further torture.

On 23 December, 'Abd al-Rahman Ghanimat met with his lawyer and gave a sworn affidavit stating that he had been forced for five-day periods for the previous six weeks to sit in *al-shabeh* with a thick sack over his head. *Al-shabeh* involves detainees being forced to sit on a very small chair to which their hands and legs are shackled. This position is extremely painful. During these periods 'Abd al-Rahman Ghanimat was prevented from sleeping and was forced to listen to loud music. 'Abd al-Rahman Ghanimat's wrists were red and swollen because they had been so tightly shackled to the chair. 'Abd al-Rahman Ghanimat complained of dizziness and pain throughout his body, including his joints and back.

On 24 December 1997 and 7 January 1998 the Israeli High Court refused applications by 'Abd al-Rahman Ghanimat's lawyer for injunctions preventing the use of these interrogation methods against her client.

On 8 January a military judge extended 'Abd al-Rahman Ghanimat's detention for a further period of 30 days. 'Abd al-Rahman informed his lawyer on 8 January that he is still being held in *al-shabeh* even though he is no longer being subjected to rounds of interrogation by the General Security Service (GSS).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Amnesty International has frequently reported on systematic torture or ill-treatment of detainees by the GSS. Interrogation methods used by the GSS contravene the UN Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, ratified by Israel in 1991. Torture is absolutely prohibited under international law, an obligation which cannot be derogated from under any circumstances.

Amnesty International has for years expressed concern that secret guidelines attached to the 1987 Landau report on the GSS allow the use of torture or ill-treatment. The Landau report allowed the use of "moderate physical pressure"; since October 1994 a special ministerial committee has allowed "increased physical pressure". In May and November 1997, the UN Committee against Torture stated that Israeli methods of interrogation constitute torture as defined in Article 1 of the Convention against Torture.

RECOMMENDED ACTION: Please send telegrams/telexes/faxes/express/airmail letters in English or your own language:

- calling for an investigation into allegations that 'Abd al-Rahman Ghanimat has been tortured and ill-treated during interrogation by the GSS in Shikma Prison. If possible, ask if he has been deprived of sleep, shackled to a chair in painful positions and subjected to hooding and continuous loud noise;
- seeking assurances that he is now being treated humanely in accordance with international standards, and urging that he be granted immediate access to any medical attention he may require;

- calling on Israel to stop the use of physical pressure during interrogation in line with its obligations under the UN Convention against Torture.

APPEALS TO:

1. Mr Binyamin Netanyahu
Prime Minister
Office of the Prime Minister
3 Kaplan Street
Jerusalem 91919, Israel
Telegrams: Prime Minister, Jerusalem, Israel
Telexes: 25279 mpres il
Faxes: +972-2-566-4838
Salutation: Dear Prime Minister

2. Judge Aharon Barak
President of the Supreme Court of Israel
Supreme Court of Israel
Shaarey Mishapt Street
Qiryat David Ben-Gurion
Jerusalem 91909
Faxes: +972-2-675-9648
Telegrams: President Supreme Court, Jerusalem, Israel
Salutation: Dear Judge Barak

3. Mr Tzahi Hanegbi, Minister of Justice
Ministry of Justice
29 Salah al-Din Street
Jerusalem 91029, Israel
Faxes: +972-2-6285-438
Telegrams: Justice Minister, Jerusalem, Israel
Salutation: Dear Minister

4. Mr Avigdor Kahalani, Minister of Internal Security
Ministry of Internal Security
PO Box 18182, 3 Sheikh Jarrah
Kiryat Hamemshala
Jerusalem 91181, Israel
Faxes: +972-2-582-6769
Telegrams: Internal Security Minister, Jerusalem, Israel
Salutation: Dear Minister

COPIES TO: diplomatic representatives of Israel accredited to your country.

PLEASE SEND APPEALS IMMEDIATELY. Check with the International Secretariat, or your section office, if sending appeals after 9 February 1998.